

MAR 21 1962

Approved For Release 1999/09/16 : CIA-RDP70-00058R000200100049-5

Nixon's Cuba Charge Denied By Kennedy

President Says He Didn't Violate Security,
That He Didn't Know Of Invasion Plan

By WILLIAM KNIGHTON JR.
[Washington Bureau of The Sun]

Washington, March 20 — The White House bluntly denied today a charge by former Vice President Richard Nixon that President Kennedy violated security restrictions during the 1960 campaign, thus jeopardizing the planned invasion of Cuba.

The denial was supported by Allen Dulles, former head of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mr. Kennedy was not advised of this program until after he was elected President, the White House said.

The denial was in answer to Nixon's statement that he was "enraged" when his Presidential opponent urged American support of intervention against the Castro regime in Cuba after being told in secret intelligence briefings that the Eisenhower Administration was training Cuban exiles for an invasion of the island.

Charge Made In Book

Such public advocacy endangered the operation, Nixon declared.

The charge of the former Vice President is made in his book, "Six Crises," to be published shortly.

The White House denial was in the form of a statement by Pierre Salinger, the President's press secretary.

This said Nixon's charge apparently was based on a "misunderstanding."

Dulles, who, according to Nixon, briefed Mr. Kennedy, also said he believed there had been an "honest misunderstanding."

Salinger was prepared with the

statement for newsmen this morning after some papers had printed the charges Nixon made in his book.

"The President," Salinger said, "does not believe that intelligence briefings are a proper subject of public debate, but in the light of the account in Mr. Nixon's book it is necessary to say that the then Senator Kennedy was not told before the election of 1960 of the training of troops outside of Cuba or of any plans for 'supporting an invasion of Cuba.'"

"Mr. Nixon's account is apparently based on a misunderstanding."

"Senator Kennedy received two briefings from Mr. Allen Dulles of the CIA. The first, on July 23, 1960, and the second on September 19, 1960."

"Over-All Review"

"The two briefings covered an overall review of the world situation during which Cuba was mentioned."

"But Senator Kennedy was first informed of the operation to which Mr. Nixon refers in a briefing by Allen Dulles and Richard Bissell, of the CIA, given in Palm Beach, Fla., on November 18, 1960."

Nixon, in his book, states that as soon as he read newspaper accounts of the Kennedy address of October 20, in which he criticized the Republican Administration for not supporting the non-Batista democratic anti-Castro forces in exile, he asked Brad Seaton, then

Secretary of the Interior and a Nixon campaign adviser, to come to his hotel room.

"I knew that President Eisenhower had arranged for Kennedy to receive regular briefings from Allen Dulles, director of the CIA, on all covert operations around the world, as well as on the latest intelligence estimates—precisely so he would be as well aware as I of what our policies and programs were."

"Asked Senator To Call"

"I asked Seaton to call the White House at once on the security line and find out whether or not Dulles had briefed Kennedy on the fact that for months the CIA had not only been supporting and assisting but actually supporting an invasion of Cuba itself."

"Seaton reported back to me a half-hour. His answer: Kennedy had been briefed on this operation."

"For the first time and only time in the campaign, I got mad at Kennedy—personally. I understand and expect hard-hitting attacks in a campaign. But in this instance I thought that Kennedy, with full knowledge of the facts, was jeopardizing the security of a United States foreign policy operation. And my rage was greater because I could do nothing about it."

Nixon said he could not attack his opponent for making public and advocating a policy already under way, for this would disclose the "secret operation and completely destroy its effectiveness."

Softer Course

So in order to protect the planned operation, he took a softer course than intervention—quarantine of Cuba—he said.

The White House said that some time after this incident, the then Senator Kennedy was again briefed by the CIA—specifically by Brig. Gen. Charles Cabell, then deputy director of the agency—but that Cuba was not mentioned at that time.

In Whittier, Cal., Nixon, advised of the White House denial, said:

"I have no comment, at this time, until I have a chance to read the statement. There will be a lot of controversy over the book, I imagine."

Dulles Comment Issued

The Dulles comment, issued through the CIA, reported that he had read both the Nixon version of the Kennedy briefings and the White House statement, and added:

"There has been here, I believe, an honest misunderstanding. This was probably due to the nature of the message Mr. Nixon writes he received as to these briefings."

"The Cuban situation was, of course, dealt with in the briefings I gave to Senator Kennedy. The last briefing I gave him was over a month before the debate in which the issue arose. My briefings were intelligence briefings on the world situation."

"They did not cover our own Government's plan or programs, overt or covert."

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